



## **Collaboration between Santa Barbara City College and the City of Kotor, Montenegro**

The SBCC School of Culinary Arts & Hotel Management was first involved with the Santa Barbara Sister City Program during spring 2003. At that time, the delegation from Dingle, Ireland had lunch in the SBCC Gourmet Dining Room and took a tour of our classrooms and kitchens. Because of that first meeting we were able to place a student in an internship at a hotel/pub in Dingle that summer.

Several years later, when the city of Kotor, Montenegro was proposed as a sister city the economic and cultural linkages for the two cities were delineated. Both cities share a tourist economy, physically both are seaside communities nestled against picturesque mountains, and sports and the theatre arts are important facets of community life. UCSB provides the sports link with their water polo team, the Granada Theatre provides the culture and SBCC's culinary arts program was tapped to provide the food and tourism link. Kotor is in the process of up-dating its tourist and hospitality industries and SBCC was recognized as having the potential to enhance this effort.

The initial program was designed to provide culinary training to a group of high-school age students who were part of a pilot food service career program in Kotor. This program was housed at an institute that dealt with deaf children and so the first cohort would include some of their students also. Randy Bublitz, Chair of the SBCC School of Culinary Arts, volunteered to help with the first summer and the Kotor Sister City Committee selected one of SBCC's culinary students, Troy Peters, to accompany him there. The program encompassed three weeks teaching and cooking in Kotor starting July 5, 2010 with 16 local students. Randy Bublitz and the students gave demonstrations in American cooking techniques, took tours of local restaurants and a luxury hotel and worked directly with the Kotor students to help them produce meals in the Institute's kitchens. Randy Bublitz met with the faculty of the University of Kotor Hospitality School and discussed student exchange programs and the growth of Kotor's tourist economy and opportunities for SBCC graduates to learn and work in Montenegro.

The summer program had a direct and positive impact upon the career goals of the students in Kotor. Furthermore, SBCC student Troy Peters gained valuable cultural and culinary experiences and knowledge in traveling to Montenegro, working with young cooks, tasting exotic foods and learning new cuisines. This trip also helped Troy's determination to succeed as a chef professionally and to return that knowledge when he eventually becomes a teacher himself. The SBCC School of Culinary Arts and Hotel Management and the college received much positive publicity from this program. There were several local news articles extolling the college and the culinary arts department published, and, due to involvement with Los Angeles personalities, there was even some press in the greater Southern California. The SBCC School of Culinary Arts was able to participate in this opportunity because of funding from the Sister City Committee and support from the SBCC Administration, including funding. Further participation in the program is currently being discussed with all funding coming from private sources.